

Happy Employees, High-Performing Company: Empathy-Based Management

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh manajemen berbasis empati terhadap kebahagiaan kerja karyawan dan kinerja perusahaan, dengan studi kasus pada PT Nusantara Almazia. Pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif dengan metode survei terhadap 120 karyawan tetap dari berbagai divisi. Instrumen yang digunakan berupa kuesioner dengan skala Likert, dan analisis data dilakukan menggunakan Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) berbasis Partial Least Squares (PLS). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa manajemen berbasis empati berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap kebahagiaan kerja karyawan, serta secara langsung maupun tidak langsung berkontribusi terhadap peningkatan kinerja perusahaan. Kebahagiaan kerja terbukti sebagai mediator yang memperkuat hubungan antara empati manajerial dan performa organisasi. Temuan ini mempertegas pentingnya pendekatan emosional dalam praktik manajemen sumber daya manusia modern, terutama dalam konteks budaya kerja di Indonesia yang menjunjung nilai-nilai kolektivisme dan relasi interpersonal. Penelitian ini memberikan implikasi praktis bagi perusahaan dalam mengembangkan pelatihan kepemimpinan empatik serta menciptakan budaya kerja yang sehat dan produktif.

Kata Kunci: Manajemen Empati, Kebahagiaan Kerja, Kinerja Perusahaan, Kepemimpinan, Sumber Daya Manusia

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effect of empathy-based management on employee job happiness and company performance, using a case study at PT Nusantara Almazia. A quantitative research approach was employed, utilizing a survey method involving 120 permanent employees from various divisions. The research instrument used was a Likert-scale questionnaire, and the data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS). The results indicate that empathy-based management has a positive and significant effect on employees' job happiness and both directly and indirectly contributes to improving company performance. Job happiness is proven to be a mediating factor that strengthens the relationship between managerial empathy and organizational performance. These findings emphasize the importance of emotional approaches in modern human resource management practices, particularly in the context of Indonesian work culture that values collectivism and interpersonal relationships. This study provides practical implications for companies in developing empathetic leadership training and creating a healthy and productive work culture.

Keywords: Empathy Management, Job Happiness, Company Performance, Leadership, Human Resources



INTRODUCTION

In an era of intense global business competition and massive digitalization, companies are required to focus not only on profit but also on human resource management as a pillar of business sustainability. Employees who are not only competent but also experience job satisfaction and happiness are proven to be more adaptive, creative, and loyal to the organization. According to a Gallup survey (2023), companies with engaged and happy employees experience up to a 21% increase in productivity and a 25% reduction in turnover. This indicates that employee happiness is not merely a complementary factor but a critical foundation for optimal company performance.

Job happiness is a condition in which employees feel emotionally, socially, and professionally fulfilled in the workplace. Factors such as positive relationships with supervisors, feeling appreciated, work-life balance, and a sense of purpose at work are key to creating happiness at work. However, in practice, many organizations still neglect this aspect. Excessive focus on targets, high work pressure, and authoritarian leadership often make employees feel unheard and stressed, which ultimately has a negative impact on their performance and loyalty.

Given this reality, there is a need for a paradigm shift in organizational management. One modern management approach considered relevant to today's challenges is empathy-based management. Empathy in leadership is not merely about sympathy, but about the ability to understand others' perspectives, respond to their emotional needs, and create a supportive and inclusive work environment. Empathetic leaders pay attention not only to work output but also to the psychological conditions and well-being of their subordinates and are capable of building constructive two-way communication.

Recent studies over the past five years have increasingly highlighted the critical role of empathy in leadership and its impact on organizational performance. Decuypere and Schaufeli (2020) found that empathy-based leadership significantly enhances employee engagement and job happiness, which in turn positively influences team performance. A study by Wang et al. (2021) in the Chinese tech industry revealed that leaders who consistently demonstrate empathy foster a psychologically safe work environment that promotes innovation and productivity. In the Indonesian context, Suryani and Mulyani (2022) reported a strong correlation between empathetic leadership and employee loyalty, with a notable reduction in turnover intention in manufacturing firms. Additionally, Prabowo et al. (2023) emphasized that job happiness mediates the relationship between leadership style and organizational effectiveness, reinforcing the idea that employee psychological well-being is a key driver of sustainable business performance. These findings provide robust theoretical and empirical foundations for further exploration of the relationship between managerial empathy, job satisfaction, and corporate outcomes.

However, despite its importance, the application of empathy in leadership has not been widely studied quantitatively in relation to organizational performance. Most research remains qualitative or focuses only on one aspect, such as leadership or job satisfaction. Hence, this study is essential to fill that gap by systematically examining the influence of empathy-based management on job happiness and company performance. Using a quantitative approach, this research aims to provide an empirical overview of the relationships between these variables in a more measurable and objective manner. The results are expected to contribute to the development of human resource management theory and serve as a practical reference for companies in designing more empathetic and sustainable managerial strategies to create not only productive but also meaningful and humane workplaces.

This study aims to examine and analyze the effect of empathy-based management on employee job happiness and its impact on company performance. Specifically, it seeks to identify the extent to which empathy in leadership and human resource management contributes to a supportive work environment that fosters employee psychological well-being. Moreover, it aims to determine whether job happiness serves as a mediating variable linking managerial empathy to improved organizational performance. By using a quantitative approach, this study is expected to provide relevant empirical evidence to reinforce the importance of incorporating empathy into managerial practices to achieve superior and sustainable organizational performance.

METHODS

This study employs a quantitative approach as it aims to examine causal relationships between the research variables through numerical measurement and statistical analysis. The type of research used is associative research, which aims to determine the influence or relationship between two or more variables. The research design is correlational survey research, chosen to allow the researcher to observe ongoing phenomena in a real work environment and measure the extent to which the relationships between empathy-based management, employee job happiness, and company performance can be explained statistically.

There are three main variables in this study. The independent variable (X) is empathy-based management, defined as a leadership approach involving a manager's ability to understand, feel, and respond constructively to employees' emotional conditions. Indicators include attention to emotional well-being, two-way communication, and concern for work-life balance. The intervening variable (Z) is employee job happiness, reflecting the extent to which employees feel satisfied, motivated, and psychologically comfortable at work. The dependent variable (Y) is company performance, assessed based on employees' perceptions of team productivity, target achievement, operational process effectiveness, and contribution to company goals.

The population of this study consists of all permanent employees working at PT Nusantara Almazia, a property developer in the industrial zone located in Bekasi, West Java. The company was chosen due to its clear organizational structure and representative management implementation, as well as its substantial workforce suitable for research. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, based on specific criteria such as a minimum of six months of service and permanent employment status. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, or adjusted to the minimum requirement of ≥ 100 respondents for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis using SmartPLS.

Data collection was carried out using closed-ended questionnaires with a 1–5 Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), distributed both online (Google Form) and offline, depending on field needs. The questionnaire was developed based on theoretical indicators from previous relevant studies, such as Goleman (2000) on empathy in leadership and Fisher (2010) on job happiness theory. The instrument was first validated through expert content validation and a try-out to test the clarity and reliability of the items.

The collected data were first analyzed for validity and reliability, where validity was tested through item-total correlation and reliability through Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha \geq 0.70$). Once the instrument was deemed reliable, the data were analyzed descriptively to determine respondent distribution and the average scores of each variable. Inferential analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM–

PLS) with the help of SmartPLS software to determine direct and indirect effects among variables and the strength of inter-construct relationships.

This research was conducted within the work environment of PT Nusantara Almazia in Bekasi, West Java, from April to June 2025. The study was carried out upholding ethical research principles, including confidentiality and anonymity of respondent data, voluntary participation, and using data solely for academic purposes. Informed consent forms were provided in each questionnaire as a sign of respect for participants' rights and comfort.

RESULT

To provide a clearer understanding of the empirical findings in this study, the following tables present the results of descriptive statistics, validity and reliability testing, as well as the outcomes of hypothesis testing using the SEM-PLS approach. These tables illustrate how employees at PT Nusantara Almazia perceive empathy-based management, their levels of job happiness, and their assessment of company performance. In addition, the statistical significance of each relationship between variables is shown to support the proposed research model. The data presented offer strong evidence of the relevance and impact of empathetic managerial practices on workplace outcomes.

Table 1. Respondents' Demographic Profile

Category		Sub-category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	66	55.0%	
	Female	54	45.0%	
Age	<25 years	14	11.7%	
	26–35 years	56	46.7%	
Tenure	36–45 years	40	33.3%	
	>45 years	10	8.3%	
Tenure	<1 year	12	10.0%	
	1–3 years	36	30.0%	
	>3 years	72	60.0%	

Source : Data Processed in 2025

The demographic data indicates that the majority of employees at PT Nusantara Almazia are within the productive age range of 26–35 years old (46.7%), suggesting that the workforce is dominated by young adults with high energy and adaptability. Additionally, a significant number of employees have worked for more than three years (60%), showing a relatively stable workforce with adequate organizational knowledge. The gender distribution, while slightly male-dominated, remains balanced, allowing the study to reflect both male and female perspectives on empathetic management. These characteristics enhance the credibility of the respondents' assessments regarding the management approach and their personal experiences related to job happiness and performance.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Empathetic Management	4.12	0.46	3.20	4.90
Job Happiness	4.01	0.49	2.80	4.80
Company Performance	4.09	0.44	3.00	4.90

Source : Data Processed in 2025

The descriptive statistics reveal that respondents perceive all key variables positively. With a mean above 4.00 across all variables (on a 1–5 Likert scale), it can be concluded that employees generally experience empathy from management, feel satisfied and emotionally content at work, and believe their organization is performing well. The relatively low standard deviations indicate a consistent perception among employees, which strengthens the validity of the findings. These results suggest that the company already fosters a healthy psychological climate, and empathetic practices are likely well-integrated into the company's leadership style.

Table 3. Validity and Reliability Test Results

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Empathetic Management	0.872	0.905	0.657
Job Happiness	0.886	0.921	0.702
Company Performance	0.842	0.893	0.629

Source : Data Processed in 2025

All constructs meet the criteria for good reliability and validity. Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.8 confirm strong internal consistency of the items in each construct. Composite Reliability values above 0.9 further support the instrument's consistency in measuring what it intends to measure. The AVE (Average Variance Extracted) values exceeding 0.5 indicate that more than half of the variance in the observed variables is captured by the latent construct, confirming convergent validity. This ensures that the measurement model is robust and the data collected can be confidently used for structural analysis.

Table 4. Path Coefficient (Hypothesis Testing)

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient (β)	t- Statistic	p- Value	Result
Empathetic Management → Job Happiness	0.67	8.12	<0.001	Supported
Job Happiness → Company Performance	0.55	6.73	<0.001	Supported
Empathetic Management → Company Performance	0.48	5.94	<0.001	Supported

Source : Data Processed in 2025

The path analysis results show that all relationships between variables are statistically significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.001$). Empathetic management has a strong positive effect on job happiness ($\beta = 0.67$), implying that when leaders show empathy, employees feel emotionally supported, respected, and engaged. Similarly, job happiness strongly influences company performance ($\beta = 0.55$), indicating that satisfied and emotionally fulfilled employees are more motivated, productive, and committed to organizational goals. The direct path from empathetic management to performance ($\beta = 0.48$) reinforces that leadership style has both direct and indirect effects on organizational outcomes, making empathy not just a soft skill but a strategic capability.

Table 5. Mediation Effect (Indirect Effect)

Path	Indirect Effect (β)	t-Statistic	p-Value	Mediation
Empathetic Management → Job Happiness → Company Performance	0.37	4.89	<0.001	Significant

Source : Data Processed in 2025

The mediation analysis confirms that job happiness significantly mediates the relationship between empathetic management and company performance. The indirect effect ($\beta = 0.37$) with a t-statistic above the critical value supports the conclusion that empathy from management boosts employee morale and satisfaction, which in turn enhances their contribution to company success. This finding highlights the psychological mechanism through which leadership impacts outcomes showing that emotional well-being is not just a personal matter but a key organizational variable. It provides empirical support for the development of internal HR programs that focus on employee happiness as a performance driver.

Table 6. R² (Coefficient of Determination)

Dependent Variable	R ²	Interpretation
Job Happiness	0.45	45% of variance explained by Empathetic Management
Company Performance	0.63	63% of variance explained by both variables

Source : Data Processed in 2025

The R² values show that 45% of the variance in job happiness can be explained by empathetic management, which is a substantial proportion considering the complexity of human emotion and motivation. Moreover, 63% of the variance in company performance is explained by the combination of empathetic leadership and job happiness, indicating a strong model fit and powerful explanatory capacity. These results confirm the strategic importance of emotional intelligence in leadership and suggest that companies should prioritize empathy training and employee well-being initiatives as part of their core business strategy.

Respondent Description

This study involved 120 participants, all of whom are permanent employees of PT Nusantara Almazia, a property and industrial area development company located in

Bekasi, West Java. The respondent composition consisted of 55% male and 45% female. Based on age groups, the majority of respondents were between 26–35 years old (47%), followed by the 36–45 age group (33%), while the remaining respondents were under 25 or over 45 years old. Regarding work tenure, approximately 60% of respondents had worked for more than three years, and 30% had been employed for over five years. This indicates that most respondents had adequate work experience to evaluate management quality and working conditions. Most of the respondents came from the production, marketing, and area planning divisions, reflecting a variety of roles in the company's productivity chain.

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

The descriptive results show that employees' perceptions of empathy-based management had a mean score of 4.12 with a standard deviation of 0.46. This indicates that most employees feel their superiors display empathetic behavior in daily interactions such as listening to concerns, offering emotional support under work pressure, and creating an open work atmosphere. For the job happiness variable, the mean score was 4.01 with a standard deviation of 0.49, indicating that employees generally feel satisfied and comfortable working at PT Nusantara Almazia, although there were some notes regarding workload and limited relaxation programs. Meanwhile, company performance from the employees' perspective had a mean score of 4.09 with a deviation of 0.44, suggesting that employees generally view the company as effective and efficient in achieving business goals and team collaboration.

Validity and Reliability Test

Validity testing was conducted through factor loading analysis using the SEM-PLS model. The results showed that all indicators for each variable had loading values > 0.70 , meaning the items were valid in measuring their respective constructs. Composite Reliability values for each variable exceeded 0.85, indicating excellent internal consistency. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all variables were above 0.5, showing that each construct could explain more than half of the variance in its indicators. The Cronbach's Alpha values for each variable also exceeded 0.80, confirming that the questionnaire had high reliability and was suitable for accurately measuring psychological constructs.

SEM-PLS Analysis Results

Hypothesis testing using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) showed that all main relationships in the research model were statistically significant. The influence of empathy-based management on job happiness was significant with a coefficient of 0.67 and p -value < 0.001 . This means that the higher the level of empathy shown by management, the higher the level of employee happiness. Furthermore, job happiness significantly influenced company performance, with a coefficient of 0.55 and p -value < 0.01 , indicating that happy employees tend to work more optimally and contribute positively to organizational performance. The direct influence of empathy-based management on company performance was also significant ($\beta = 0.48$; $p < 0.01$), confirming that empathetic managerial behavior directly affects overall team efficiency and output.

Mediation Test

The mediation test using indirect effect analysis showed that job happiness significantly mediated the relationship between empathetic management and company performance, with an indirect effect value of 0.37 ($p < 0.05$). This means that the effect of empathy-based management on performance occurs not only directly but also through employees' emotional happiness and engagement with their work. With this mediation path, companies can position job happiness as a key strategy in driving productivity and

loyalty, as proposed by Elton Mayo's Human Relations theory, which states that emotional work climate influences labor output.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination (R^2) for job happiness was 0.45, indicating that 45% of the variance in job happiness could be explained by empathy-based management. Meanwhile, the R^2 for company performance was 0.63, showing that the combination of empathetic management and job happiness explained 63% of performance variance in the organization. These are relatively high figures within the context of social and human resource management research, indicating that the model used has strong predictive power.

Interpretation and Discussion of Findings

These findings support Goleman's (2000) theory of emotional intelligence, which states that empathy is a key component of effective leadership. They also align with Fisher's (2010) research, which concluded that job happiness is positively correlated with both individual and collective performance. Within PT Nusantara Almazia, a humanistic leadership style, concern for employee well-being, and open communication have proven to increase satisfaction and team effectiveness. These results reinforce the relevance of a well-being management approach, which is becoming increasingly critical in addressing modern workplace challenges.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

Some internal company factors that support the success of empathetic management include an open organizational culture, an efficient reporting system, and transformational leadership at the middle-management level. However, obstacles were also identified, such as high workloads, limited relaxation and work-life balance programs, and a lack of empathetic communication training for certain line managers. If these challenges are not addressed promptly, the full potential of job happiness in boosting performance may not be fully realized.

Research Implications

This research holds important practical and academic implications. Practically, it provides valuable insights for PT Nusantara Almazia's management in developing empathy-based policies and training programs, as well as creating a more inclusive workspace that supports employees' emotional well-being. Academically, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on the importance of emotional approaches in human resource management, particularly within the context of Indonesian business organizations. It sets the foundation for future research on empathy-driven management and happiness-based performance culture.

DISCUSSION

Alignment of Results with Initial Hypotheses

All analytical results support the initial hypotheses proposed in this study. The relationships between empathy-based management and job happiness, as well as between job happiness and company performance, were proven to be statistically significant. These findings reinforce the idea that in modern workplaces, managerial approaches that rely solely on control and performance targets are no longer sufficient. Instead, organizations that foster empathy and pay attention to employees' emotional dimensions are more likely to cultivate loyal, creative, and productive workers. The mediation hypothesis was also confirmed, indicating that job happiness is not only an outcome of empathetic management but also a crucial channel through which empathy influences final organizational performance.

Alignment with Related Theories

This study aligns not only with Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence but also enriches our understanding of Human Capital Theory, which posits that people are vital assets requiring emotional and social investment not merely financial. The findings are also relevant to Amy Edmondson's concept of psychological safety, which highlights that employees who feel valued, heard, and emotionally secure are more likely to innovate and speak up. This implies that empathy is not just a moral value, but a strategic competency capable of creating a healthy and productive work environment.

Comparison with Previous Research

Several prior studies conducted in different contexts ranging from education and healthcare to creative industries have found similar results. For instance, a study by Widystuti (2020) at a private hospital in Yogyakarta revealed that empathetic leadership enhanced nurse satisfaction and loyalty. Another study by Lee & Ok (2012) in the hospitality sector demonstrated that job happiness significantly contributed to customer satisfaction. These comparisons strengthen the argument that the effects of empathy and job happiness are cross-sectoral, and this study extends those findings into the context of a property company in Indonesia.

Practical Implications

From a practical standpoint, companies should interpret these results as an important signal that employee emotional well-being is not merely an HR concern but a strategic issue tied directly to productivity and business sustainability. Companies are encouraged to develop continuous training systems for empathetic leadership, including coaching on active listening, non-verbal communication, and conflict management. Furthermore, policies such as flexible working hours, work-life balance programs, and approaches that support mental health should be incorporated into comprehensive company policies.

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the perspective that empathy is not only an interpersonal trait but can also be viewed as organizational capital capable of fostering a strong and adaptive work culture. The findings support the importance of integrating humanistic approaches into modern management theories, which often focus solely on rationality, efficiency, and hierarchy. Empathy- and happiness-based approaches enable organizations to grow not only economically but also socially and emotionally, thereby creating more civilized and human-centered workplaces.

Mediation Role: A New Understanding

The finding that job happiness mediates the impact of empathetic management on performance provides a new insight: organizations must focus not only on structure and systems but also on the psychological climate. Happy employees tend to demonstrate stronger commitment, lower stress levels, and greater creativity. This creates a positive domino effect across teamwork, interdepartmental relationships, and even customer service. In other words, high performance results from a causal chain that begins with leaders capable of building warm and supportive relationships.

Socio-Cultural Context

In the context of Indonesian work culture which tends to uphold family values, social sensitivity, and respect for authority empathetic leadership styles are more easily accepted and practiced. The collectivist nature of Indonesian society makes authoritarian or distant management styles psychologically stressful. On the other hand, "down-to-earth" managers who foster two-way communication are often more successful in building team trust. This finding is crucial as it shows that empathetic practices align with strong local cultural values and can serve as a source of sustainable organizational advantage.

Research Limitations

This study was conducted within a limited scope, involving only one company, which means the results cannot yet be generalized to all industries. Moreover, the quantitative approach has limitations in capturing the subjective meanings of empathy and job happiness as personally experienced by individuals. The use of perception-based data also carries a risk of respondent bias, for example due to social desirability or their relationship with supervisors. Nevertheless, this research still provides a solid foundation for further studies using triangulation or longitudinal designs.

Directions for Future Research

To enhance generalizability and understanding, future research is recommended across various industry sectors such as public services, manufacturing, and digital startups considering differences in organizational structure and work culture. A mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data could offer a more comprehensive view of emotional dynamics in the workplace. Furthermore, it is important to explore additional variables such as psychological climate, employee resilience, or sense of belonging, which could enrich empathy-driven models in human resource management.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that empathy-based management has a significant influence on employee job happiness and company performance at PT Nusantara Almazia. The higher the level of empathy demonstrated by management through emotional support, open communication, and concern for employee well-being the greater the level of job happiness experienced by employees. Furthermore, job happiness is proven to be a strong mediator in the relationship between managerial empathy and improved company performance, both directly and indirectly. This study affirms that a humanistic and empathetic leadership approach not only enhances the quality of work relationships but also serves as an effective managerial strategy for achieving sustainable performance. Therefore, it is essential for organizations to cultivate a work culture that places empathy and employee well-being at the core of managerial decision-making processes.

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